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Stroman et al.

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[54] **CONTINUOUS CONVEYOR BELT**

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[52] **U.S. Cl.** **209/639**; 209/644; 209/923; 198/850

[58] **Field of Search** 209/639, 644, 209/587, 577, 912, 923, 939; 198/339.1, 850, 851, 831

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[57] **ABSTRACT**

A continuous conveyor belt for transporting a stream of objects to an inspection station includes a plurality of links matingly joined together to form a surface for supporting the objects for movement along a given path of travel to the inspection station, and wherein the continuous conveyor belt is entrained between a drive roller and a nose bar which has a given diametral dimension, and wherein the continuous conveyor belt propels the objects into free flight and in a given pattern through a sorting station which is disposed downstream of, and in spaced relation relative to the nose bar, and wherein the individual links when passing about the nose bar effectively minimizes the size of the object pattern passing through the sorting station, while simultaneously maintaining product separation which permits imaging of substantially the entire surface area of each product.

46 Claims, 7 Drawing Sheets